

It is fitting that we address this legislation during National Public Health Week, a time when our attention is focused on the critical need to improve public health. I think it is also fitting that we recognize this week while we remember Ryan White, who died 18 years ago yesterday. This brave young man, whose namesake, the Ryan White CARE Act, has saved so many from the ravages of HIV/AIDS, taught us all an important lesson about our personal roles in improving the public's health.

I am the sponsor of two bills that passed this week, the Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act regarding early detection, diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss, and the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Management Act, which provides schools with guidelines on how to create appropriate management and emergency plans for children with food allergies.

I also support the following bills that were adopted by the House this week:

The Wakefield Act, which amends the Public Health Service Act to improve emergency services for children who need treatment for trauma or critical care;

The Cytology Proficiency Improvement Act, which provides revised standards for quality assurance in screening and evaluation of gynecologic cytology preparations to ensure that health care professionals who screen and interpret tests for cervical cancer are skilled in today's medical technology;

Reauthorization of the Traumatic Brain Injury Act, which provides for the expansion and improvement of traumatic brain injury programs by providing grants to States to support the treatment and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury patients.

The Safety of Seniors Act, which directs the United States Department of Health and Human Services to oversee and support education campaigns focused on reducing falls and preventing repeat falls among older Americans;

And finally, the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, which establishes grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated follow-up care once newborn screening has been conducted.

These bills will make great strides in ensuring the public's health and the essential mission of our Nation. Without health, children cannot grow to be all that God meant for them to be, adults cannot fulfill their role as contributing members of our society, and our elderly cannot peacefully live out their golden years.

If one were to ask any of us to list those things that might be the enemy of our destiny, we would all have to agree that poor health would be at the top of the list. For this reason, I will continue to fight for the expansion of quality health care programs to help ensure that every American can benefit from a more vibrant and productive quality of life.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. WELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. I rise in support of bringing this important agreement to the House floor.

Ladies and gentlemen, I come from the State of Illinois. I represent a district that's heavily dependent on exports for growing our economy. We make heavy construction equipment. We grow a lot of corn and soybeans. We export a tremendous amount of plastics and petrochemicals. This trade agreement is a big winner for States like Illinois as it is for our Nation.

You know, right now our products made in Colombia, whether farm products or manufactured goods, they enter the United States essentially duty free. The Andean Nations of Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia, they've got the opportunity for all their products to come to the United States duty free, but our products made in America face taxes when they're exported to Colombia. In fact, the bulldozers made in my district, I have 8,000 workers, union workers who work for Caterpillar, they make the yellow bulldozers. Mining is a big industry in Colombia, we want to sell those products there, but they face 15 percent tariffs when they're exported. It makes them harder to compete with the Asians.

The corn and soybeans and livestock products produced in my district, they face tariffs today up to 40 percent, making it hard to compete with the Argentinians and Brazilians and the Colombian market, a nation of over 40 million people.

The bottom line is 80 percent of U.S. exports to Colombia will be duty free immediately once this trade agreement goes into effect. And I would note that, as we've seen, countries like Chile and the central American countries and elsewhere where we have trade agreements, we've seen 50 percent faster growth in exports in nations who have trade agreements than those who do not.

And I would note also, again, Colombian products come to the United States duty free, tariff free, but our products face barriers going in. This agreement eliminates those and makes trade a two-way street. It's an important agreement, and I urge it be brought up for a vote and I urge bipartisan support.

Those who oppose this trade agreement say Colombia hasn't done

enough. And I want to begin by asking, who is the Republic of Colombia? What nation in Latin America is the oldest democracy in Latin America? It's Colombia. What nation is the second largest Spanish-speaking nation in all Latin America? Colombia. What nation is the most reliable ally of the United States, particularly when it comes to counterterrorism and counter-narcotics? Colombia. And what nation has done more under its current democratically elected president to reduce violence in Latin America? It's Colombia, clearly.

Colombia is not only a friend of the United States, in fact, our enemies in Latin America identify Colombia as our best friend. And they say, you know, watch the United States, they always turn their back on their friends; watch how they treat Colombia when it comes to this trade agreement.

And those who would argue against this trade agreement say, you know, you've got to look at the labor violence, you've got to look at the violence in the country; and Colombia just has not done enough to address violence. Well, President Uribe is the most popular elected president in this entire hemisphere. This Congress today suffers from a 15 percent approval rating, President Uribe in Colombia has an 80 percent approval rating. He was elected to reduce the violence in his country, and he succeeded.

In fact, 71 percent of Colombians today say they feel more secure because of President Uribe. Seventy-three percent say President Uribe respects human rights. Homicides are down 40 percent, kidnappings are down 76 percent. Colombians feel free to drive anywhere in Colombia. And I would point out that today, the murder rate in Colombia is lower than Washington, D.C., it's lower than Baltimore. It's safer to walk the streets of Bogota, Colombia than it is in Washington, D.C., yet those who oppose this agreement say the murder rate is too high and that Colombia needs to do more. But Washington, D.C. is more violent than Colombia.

Here's the facts: When it comes to labor violence, President Uribe has made major changes. He has increased the Prosecutor General's budget by 72 percent in the last 2 years. He has added over 2,100 new posts, adding 418 new prosecutors, 445 new investigators. He has done so much that the President of the United Workers Confederation of Colombia says, "never in the history of Colombia have we achieved something so important." Yet there are those who want to turn their back on President Uribe in Colombia.

And when it comes specifically to protections provided to labor leaders, and I have met with many Colombian labor leaders, and they note that in Colombia, if you're a labor activist or labor leader and you feel in danger, you can request special protection from the government.

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And last year under President Uribe, they spent \$39 million providing body guards and special protection for labor leaders and labor activists. In fact, almost 2,000 labor leaders and activists have participated in this program, and it's been so successful that no labor leader who has requested the assistance has been denied because it's provided to those who are denied it, but also no one who has ever participated has ever been a victim of violence. It's been successful. And as the Washington Post noted, and you don't want to see anyone lose their life, but the murder rate for labor activists is actually lower than the murder rate for the average citizens of Colombia. And, again, it's safer to walk the streets of Bogota than it is in Washington, D.C. from the standpoint of being a victim of violent crime or, frankly, a victim of murder.

The International Labor Organization has recognized the progress Colombia has made. In fact, they have removed Colombia from its labor watch list. And Colombia has agreed to have a permanent International Labor Organization representative in Colombia.

Just a few weeks ago, this House overwhelmingly, with bipartisan support, ratified the U.S.-Peru agreement, and Colombia has agreed to every same labor condition that was demanded of Peru. Colombia has agreed to the same. So for those who demanded it, they should be proclaiming victory.

The bottom line is Colombia is a friend of the United States. And there are those who want to kill this agreement, those who want to turn their back on Colombia. Let's remember this agreement is good for Americans, it's also good for Colombia, but our best friend in Latin America is Colombia. They deserve a vote and they deserve a "yes" vote, bipartisan support, for the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS of Tennessee addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

COLOMBIA AND OIL: GET IT WHILE YOU CAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, the Bush administration announced this week it will be sending to the Congress for approval the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. And the American people might ask, Colombia? Now? In 2008? What about the District of Columbia and getting gas prices lower here in our Nation's capital? Or what about more fairly priced student loans for the next

generation who are attempting to improve their opportunities for the years ahead? Or what about dealing with mortgage foreclosures in the United States, which are at epidemic levels in places like Ohio and Michigan and Florida and California? No. The President sends us something to help another country. "Colombia Free Trade," they call it.

Well, I would like to say to the American people tear the veneer off the agreement and look below it, and what you will find is crude. Oil. What this agreement really is about is more imported petroleum from one of the most undemocratic places in the world.

Colombia about 10 years ago was actually a net importer of oil. But today it is the fourth leading oil producer in South America. In fact, oil, rock/crude, has become Colombia's leading export product, and guess whom they send most of it to? You've got it right. The United States of America.

So what this Colombia Free Trade deal is all about is more imported oil, more dirty crude, more carbon emissions, more dependency of the people of the United States for energy, more living back in the 20th Century than embracing the 21st with energy independence here at home.

The oil picture in Colombia is clouded by rapidly declining production because of persistent attacks from people inside Colombia. What no one has mentioned, and the President didn't send it up here in his statement, is our country is already sending billions of dollars to Colombia to hold up the government. Why? To protect certain economic interests, including the rising export of petroleum.

This is a graph showing production levels of petroleum in Colombia back since the late 1980s, then up through 2000, when all of a sudden they started to decline because of unrest inside the country itself.

Now, it's no secret that there are 18 foreign oil companies in Colombia. Guess what. The majority of their headquarters is located right here in the United States. They have drilling operations in Colombia. California-based Occidental Petroleum launched an attempt to squeeze out of Colombia what oil remains with its discovery in 1983 of the Cano Limon field in the northeastern part of the country. The problem is that particular field produces less than a third of its total as recently as 4 years ago. Its production is going down.

British Petroleum, not to be outdone, has been drilling in the eastern plains in the Andes Mountains in the largest field in the country. However, that production has fallen by about two-thirds, and rather than 400,000 barrels a day, they produce about 170,000 barrels.

Faced with rapidly declining production, the Colombian Government has taken steps to improve the investment climate in Colombia and giving permission for foreign oil companies to own 100 percent stakes in oil ventures in

Colombia. The Government of Colombia also established a lower sliding scale royalty fee, now at 8 percent on the smallest oil fields, and that set of actions have attracted an estimated \$2 billion more in foreign investments since 2006. The oil industry is focusing heavily on this country.

Entering into the picture is the geopolitical position of Colombia because if we look at the United States having nearly half of their exports, Venezuela is number two, and we all know the difficulties with Venezuela. So there's a little strategic problem here related to the U.S. perception across Latin America. But it's important to tear the veneer off something called "Colombia Free Trade" and look at what is actually being traded out of Colombia.

While the United States continues to support the violent regime in Colombia, political unrest and political repression continue to cloud the discussion, and declining oil exports prove it. We can go back to 1988 when a car bomb outside of Occidental's nine-story Colombian headquarters in Bogota badly damaged that building. In October, 2000, a truck bomb nearly missed a bus filled with 40 Occidental secretaries and other company employees. And in April, 2001, rebels seized a bus filled with 100 Occidental oil workers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to include in the RECORD lots of information about Occidental Petroleum, which is just one example of what's happening in Colombia, and also some of Occidental Petroleum's political influence here in Washington, in the Congress and in the White House.

OCCEIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION

Occidental Petroleum Corporation is one of the largest U.S.-based oil and gas multinationals, with exploration projects in three states and nine foreign countries, including Colombia. It has operated in Colombia for more than three decades; in 1983, Occidental discovered Caño Limón, Colombia's second-largest oil field and one of only 50 billion-barrel-class fields in the world. Occidental's investment in Caño Limón paid off long ago, with its share of production yielding hundreds of millions of dollars annually. Even through years of rebel attacks and pipeline closings, Caño Limón Field continues to be a profitable venture for Occidental.

In recent years, Occidental has simplified its oil and gas operations by focusing its operations in the United States, the Middle East and Latin America. Despite drastic oil price declines in 2001, Occidental Petroleum had its second-best annual earnings ever.

Annual sales: \$14 billion

Annual net income: \$1.2 billion.

CEO and annual executive salary: Ray Irani, \$24 million (six-year average); Forbes Magazine ranked Irani the second-worst among executives who gave shareholders the least return on their investment compared with their own pay. In 2001, Irani's compensation package included free financial planning, country club dues and a \$2.6 million bonus.

Founded: 1920.

Stock: Publicly traded (OXY) on the New York Stock Exchange.

Corporate headquarters: Los Angeles.

Employees: 8,235.

Colombia operations: Occidental owns Caño Limón Field in the province of Aruaca,